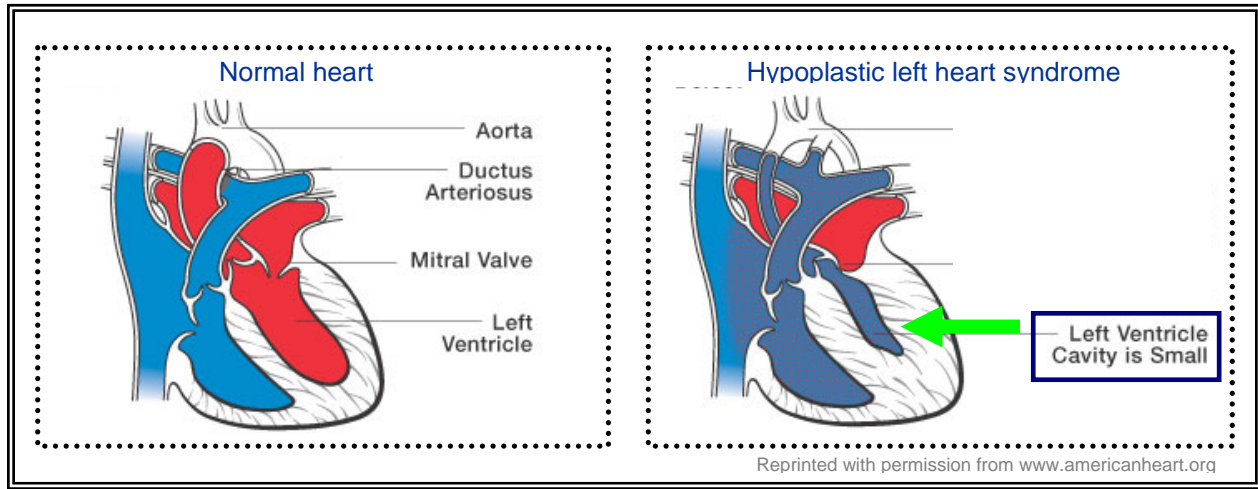


# Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome

## What is hypoplastic left heart syndrome?

Hypoplastic left heart syndrome (also called HLHS) is a **combination** of several abnormalities of the heart and blood vessels. In children who have HLHS, most of the chambers and valves on the left side of the heart are small or absent. The **mitral valve** (opening between the upper and lower chambers on the left side of the heart) and the **aortic valve** (opening of the **aorta**, the major blood vessel coming out of the heart) are usually small or absent. In HLHS, the **left ventricle** (lower chamber of the heart) is **hypoplastic** (small and underdeveloped). Normally, this chamber is very strong and muscular so it can pump blood to the body. When the chamber is small and poorly developed, it cannot function properly and is unable to provide enough blood to meet the body's needs. Approximately 4 out of every 10,000 babies born each year have HLHS.



## What causes HLHS?

Currently, the exact cause of HLHS is not known. Heredity likely plays a role in the development of all heart defects, meaning that if someone had a congenital heart defect, he or she has an increased chance of having a child with a heart defect.

## How is HLHS treated?

HLHS cannot be corrected, although some babies can be treated with a series of operations or a heart transplant. Until an operation can be performed, medication is used to help the heart provide blood to the body. If untreated, an infant with HLHS will not survive more than a few days or months. Your child's doctor(s) will discuss appropriate treatment options with you.

## For more information

**American Heart Association** - <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=11105>

**Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center's Heart Center Encyclopedia** –

<http://www.cincinnatichildrens.org/health/heart-encyclopedia/default.htm>

**MedlinePlus** - <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/congenitalheartdefects.html>

**National Heart Lung and Blood Institute** - [http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/chd/chd\\_what.html](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/chd/chd_what.html)

**Sources:** Cincinnati Children's Hospital, American Heart Association